

Interviewed by Kathleen Irving, 30 June 2004 and 9 July 2004

Transcribed by Kathleen Irving, January 2005

Kathleen Irving (KI): This is Kathi Irving. Today is 30 June 2004. I'm with Royal Henderson at his home at 40 West 500 South in Vernal. Royal, would you please start out by telling me when you were born and about your very early life.

Royal Henderson: I was born here in Vernal. Our home was on 4<sup>th</sup> West and Main Street. The building, our home, is the office building now of the Antlers Motel. That was our home. My dad and mother lived in that house for many, many years before I was born. They acquired it through a trade with one of the Harmstons' from Roosevelt. Most of my brothers and sisters were born in that house. Charles and Mary were not born there. They were born other places in Vernal.

KI: Who were your parents?

Royal: My parents were William Sidney Henderson and May Bartlett Henderson. I was born at home, but the attending doctor was O'Donnell.

KI: A woman.

Royal. Yes. She was a woman doctor here in Vernal.

KI: When were you born?

Royal: August 25, 1920. I grew up and I did all my school. I went to the Central School in the old, old building of Central School, the first two years in what we called the "new building" at Central School. It was a two-story building. I had the first two years on the ground floor, the next two years on the second floor of that school. Johnny McNaughton was the principal at the time I was there. Many of the kids from this country were in school there because that was the only big school there was in the valley.

KI: Can you tell me what the layout of those buildings was?

Royal: The big building, which we called the new building, was on the corner of 2<sup>nd</sup> South and Vernal Avenue, just north of the existing grade school building that's there. The old building was south of that building, there was little playground area, open area, between that and the old building. It was a one-story building. It had a bell tower on the top. So when I was in the third and fourth grade, we were in that old building and we would get a turn occasionally to ring the school bell. It had a rope that came down into the hall of that building. You'd pull on that rope and it would ring the bell.

KI: Do you know how old those buildings were when you went there? Do you know when they might have been built?

Royal: Well, I don't remember the dates of them, how old they were. But the new building, when I went there—and I started when I was six—that was fairly new, but it was still a pretty old building.

KI: I know one of the buildings was built in 1900. Do you think it would have been the new building that was built in 1900?

Royal: No, I think that would be what I call the old building. I'm not positive of those dates, but that's the way I remember it, that it would have been about that vintage. Then in '26 there was what we called the new building and there were some other temporary buildings that had been built in there and used. On the west edge of that block was the horse stables because many of the students rode horses to school in those days and they had that place to tie up the horses while we were in school. I didn't have a horse to ride, but a lot of my classmates did ride to school.

KI: Is that because you lived fairly close?

Royal: I lived just on 4<sup>th</sup> West and Main Street, so I was very close to school. I always walked to school, nobody ever took me to school in the car or anything. It wasn't bad.

KI: Do you remember some of your teachers?

Royal: Mrs. Witmer was my first grade teacher. She lived just across the road east of the school. Her husband ran a tin shop on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> South and Vernal Avenue, Witmer Tin Shop.

KI: Wasn't he the Witmer who did the tin work on the Uintah Stake Tabernacle?

Royal: I think so, yes. I'd forgotten about that, but he was the main tinsmith in my days anyway. I went through the six grades there. John Stagg was my teacher in the sixth grade. I can't remember right off the top of my head the other teachers' names.

KI: Okay, you had first and second in one building, third and fourth in the other building.

Royal: We had [two] grades in the new building and then we went over to the smaller building, the one with the bell on, for the next two grades, then back to the second story of the new building for the fifth and sixth grades.

KI: I've had several people tell me about John Stagg. He must have been memorable.

Royal: He was a good teacher. I liked him. I liked him all of his life. I knew him right up to the time that he died. I enjoyed my schooling there. I thought I learned a lot, probably didn't, but I felt like I did. I liked my teachers. Recesses were great. We had great sports activities. All the recesses, we'd always go out and play. We had good playgrounds, had a great time.

KI: What kinds of games did you play during recess?

Royal: Oh, tag and volleyball and sometimes some baseball, probably softball.

KI: Did the marbles come out in the spring?

Royal: Yes, we played marbles. We had a handful of marbles we'd carry to school in our pockets, always have our best agate as a taw. We did quite a little of that in the spring.

KI: Do you ever remember getting in trouble at school?

Royal: I don't ever remember being chastised or disciplined in any way at school. I may have been, but I forgot it quick.

KI: Did you have to march into school in the mornings or did you just go in and find your seat and sit down?

Royal: We always played outside, then when the bell rang to go in, I don't know that we lined up in any particular order, but we did come right on in to school. I don't think we ever did a marching into school. There were times when we marched from one place to another for different activities, but I don't remember having to march into school. But we always did stand up by our desk until everybody was in and then we'd usually sing a song and have some kind of activity, then we'd go right into classes.

I had my six years of grade school there, then went up to the Uintah High School, in the old building of the high school. There were two buildings at that time. The old building was on the north part of the block up there. My seventh and eighth grades were there, those were my junior high years. Didn't call it junior high then, it was just seventh and eighth grade. Then the other four years were in the main building.

There was an Olson that lived in town that was an instructor then and I had him for classes. Ralph Siddoway was a teacher there; he taught business and typing, and those type of classes. I can't recall the names of the others right this minute.

KI: Did you take seminary when you were in school?

Royal: Yes, I took seminary. Our seminary classes were held in the east end of the tabernacle, on the ground floor. So we'd go from school down to there for our seminary classes.

KI: There's a building there right now, where the LDS Church Distribution Center is, was that there when you were in school? How long has that building been there, do you know?

Royal: East of the temple? See, the tabernacle was in the front and when they built the temple, they just remodeled the tabernacle. In essence they practically stripped it down inside and rebuilt everything inside. But the exterior of the temple is the old tabernacle.

\*\*\*KI: But I'm talking about the building that's right behind the current swimming pool [613 West 200 South]. There's the school district building back in there and there's the swimming

pool where the old high school used to be. There's an old building there that I think says "Seminary" on it.

Royal: The seminary the first years I was there was down at the tabernacle. Then they built the seminary building on the north side of the street, next to the high school there. The swimming pool is about where the new building and kind of to the back of where the new high school building was.

KI: So the seminary building that's still there, you went to seminary there for a while?

Royal: I think they built that in the last two years that I was in high school. I'm not sure of that, though, I don't have that fixed in my mind. Anyway, that was built while we were in our high school years. That covers six years that I was in school there.

KI: What were some of your favorite classes?

Royal: Oh, I liked band. I played the trumpet, the coronet really. I played that the first year while I was just learning in it. I didn't do much. By the time I graduated, why then I was playing full-fledged trumpet. I was the marching band and all of that. That was one of my favorites because it always got us to get out on the parades and do parades and we always got to go into the basketball games and have a seat right in the orchestra pit in the new building there.

The new building was built so that the basketball court was on a raised level, then the auditorium sloped down towards the edge of the stage, the edge of the court, which we called the stage because that's where we did all the drama and assemblies and everything, on there. So the actual seats were on a slope, so we had good visibility. But the basketball games were always up on the basketball floor. But when we did plays or an assembly, we used that basketball floor for the platform for the stages for the assemblies or meetings or all kinds of activities that took place there.

KI: Tell me again about your drama.

Royal: When Barney White came, and that was the year I was a junior in high school, I hadn't done anything with drama or anything like that. I was always too small. I was one of the smallest kids in school, in my class.

KI: You grew!

Royal: It was like that all the way through school until I was a senior. I grew, I got most of my height the year I was a senior. But in the physical activities, I was the runt, the little kid. But when Barney came, why, I took dramatic arts from him. That was my first attempt at doing dramatic arts or anything like that. I found I really enjoyed it, but I wasn't a very good actor. I guess he could tell that because he says, "I'm going to use you for the stage manager." He says, "The stage manager is going to be the assistant director." Essentially, he didn't say that in so many words, but that's what it turned out to be. So I worked right as a stage manager from the time we started a play until we produced it.

The first year we did a lot of short plays and a number of full-fledged plays. We took one of our plays out to the state, what we called a tournament then, a competition at BYU. We took that and got one of the awards. Dan Price was one of the lead actors. Charlie Bingham was a great, great actor. Dan Oaks, Thelma Woolley, she married Frank Wright, the coach, when she was a senior. It kind of stirred up the town for a coach to marry [a student]. Thelma's the same age as I was, almost a year older, but not quite.

We took one of the plays up to one of the schools in the Salt Lake or Sandy area and produced a play out there for them once. Another time we went to one of the junior high schools up there, and took one of our plays. That gave me quite a little activity in the dramatic arts area.

KI: Did they have a club for drama at the time?

Royal: No, we didn't have a club as such.

KI: I've seen in some of the old yearbooks the Le Masque club.

Royal: Well, they might have called it a club, but there were a lot of pictures in the yearbooks of our plays.

KI: Did you graduate in 1938?

Royal: I did graduate in '38.

KI: That was right in the middle of the Depression. Did you have trouble?

Royal: Well, we had troubles in the Depression. When it hit, Dad had just built the second set of cabins at the west end of town there. All the time I was in high school and through there, things were pretty tough.

KI: I'm almost surprised that the school had the means to get you out to Salt Lake to do these competitions.

Royal: Well, now this is up into '34, '35 and '36. '31 and '32 were the toughest part of the Depression, but it held on through there. It made it tough. Dad hired labor for a dollar a day. A lot of times they'd come and work for a night's sleep in the motel, if they were traveling. They'd work a day and stay at night.

KI: Since we've got you up to high school, why don't you go back and tell me about your dad and his business, because you did a lot with that as a child.

Royal: How far back shall I start on my dad, when he came to Utah?

KI: Sure.

Royal: Well, Dad was living in Quincy, Illinois, when he graduated from high school. He was

going to go into the ministry in a church and become a minister. So he went to Chicago to start his education to become a minister. Right around Christmas time of that year, his parents both died, within a matter of a few weeks of each other. So he had to leave school and go back to Quincy to settle up the affairs of his parents because all of his brothers were older and they were gone and out working and they couldn't leave their jobs to go back and take care of the parents' affairs.

His parents ran a fine tea and china shop in the downtown area of Quincy. So they had quite a bit of inventory and quite a bit of business to keep going or to do something with. So Dad left school and went back to take care of the family affairs. He stayed right there with it until the affairs were sold. Everything was liquidated there. He finished that up and it was spring time and he decided to go to Denver where one of his brothers worked, his brother Ernest. He was an installer of elevators for the Otis Elevator Company. He decided that he wanted to go to visit with him. He'd closed up the affairs and things were stable.

So he got on a train to go west. Quincy is right on the banks of a river. He was also, during his growing up time, a great bicyclist. The picture on the wall there is a picture of his bicycle club that he was a member of in Quincy. That's an over one hundred-year-old photograph. Now when he got on the train to go west, why, a lot of his friends from the bicycle club got their bicycles and got permission to put them on the train and ride across the river with him to the next town. Then they got off and rode their bikes over the bridge and rode back to town.

After that he labored on and when they were headed west again, there was a well-dressed gentleman on the train. He spoke to Dad and said, "I think that was a great thing that all those friends of yours would put their bikes on to see you off on your trip, then ride the bikes back home." That started a conversation with Dad. He finally told Dad all of his story about where he came from. He came from Utah and he had a trading post that he did dealing with the Indians, trading and supplying the Indians stuff at Myton, Utah. He had just been to Washington to get permission to increase or expand his business there so they could treat the Indians better. They were supposed to help him with some financing of that to build it and expand it.

He said, "I've used up nearly all my money making the trip there and I'm short of money." So he borrowed a little money from my dad to buy his dinner. In those days it was about a seven-day trip. It took about a week to go from there [Washington] to Denver on the train. They weren't moving very fast in those days.

KI: But they stayed on the train, didn't they? They had sleeper cars on the train?

Royal: Yes, and eat right on the train. So Dad bought him his meals and loaned him a little money. By the time he got to Denver, he had loaned him quite a little money. When he got to Denver, the money that was supposed to have been sent to him to expand his business didn't show up. So he said, "I'm sorry, I can't repay the money I've borrowed from you, what I owe you. They promised me they'd send it over to Price, so I can get it." So Dad said, "Okay, you send it to me." He promised to wire it back to Denver as soon as it came.

So finally summer went on and it got into the fall and he hadn't heard from him. He hadn't heard any word from him. So he sent telegrams over, but apparently they didn't get any results. So he decided he'd better go over there and find out about it. So he got on the train, got over to Price, got off and found out the only way to get over the mountains to Myton was to go

on a freight wagon. So he made arrangements to come over Nine Mile Canyon and get to Myton. So he rode over there.

When he got to the trading post, he walked in and the guy said, "Well, I'm sorry I didn't get the money. I don't have any money to repay you with. The only thing I can do is just give you the keys to the store. You'll have to take that for what I owe you." So he took that and started to run the trading post.

KI: Do you remember the name of the man who had the place in Myton?

Royal: I can't recall it right now, but there's quite an article in the Vernal Express about it. He was the son or a brother or a relative of somebody that was working for the Indian Department at Fort Duchesne.

KI: What was your dad doing in Denver while he was there?

Royal: He was just visiting. It was just for the summer. I don't know what he did to entertain himself, but his brother was there. I think he just got sightseeing and doing whatever. I don't know.

KI: So he ended up in Myton.

Royal: He ended up in Myton with a trading post. He ran that for a short time, then traded it for a business up in Roosevelt, a hotel business. So he moved up to there and disposed of the trading post. That trading post was right on the Duchesne River where you cross at Myton. It was just on the east side of that crossing. There was a ford there to begin with and eventually the bridges were built there in the same general location, and that's the location of where his trading post was.

KI: How long was he there?

Royal: Not very long. He traded that off within the year. Then he took over the hotel in Roosevelt and very shortly traded that business for another business in Vernal. I'm not sure of the chronology and timing of it, but I think that he took over what was the old Gibson Hotel, in Vernal, on Main Street, just beyond 1<sup>st</sup> West. It was called the Elk Hotel, I think. Anyway, he and his brother, Ernest, Ernest's health was starting to fail. I think he had TB. Anyway, he came to Vernal to work with Dad in the hotel business. They ran the **Alwilda??** for some time. I don't know the chronology and time frames to tell you off hand what it is.

After Dad moved to Vernal, he was in Vernal a very short time and was elected to go on the city council. He got right involved with the affairs of the city. We got the copy of all the articles from the Vernal Express that had W. S. Henderson involved with it. There were like thirty-seven pages of them, articles in which his name appeared.

My [son] was here from Richmond, California, and he took all of that paperwork with him and he's doing something with it now. If he doesn't get too old too soon, he should come up with some information on that. We were amazed. When he was here we went in to get that, see what we could find. Doris [Burton] had us go to that index and just check it out. We printed out

the index. It came out voluminous.

But anyway, he got involved real quick with the affairs of the community. He was put on the city council very shortly and from then and the rest of his life, he was very, very active in the community in a lot of ways.

He was not a Mormon and he found a young lady here in the Bartlett family, May Bartlett. Apparently, they decided they were going to get married, but the parents would have nothing to do with him. So Mother and her family were living in the house kitty-corner from here, in a two-story house just back of the corner house there.

KI: That would be on the southeast corner of 5<sup>th</sup> South and Vernal Avenue.

Royal: Yes. There's a brick house now right on the corner and just back of that is a two-story house. That two-story house was built when Mother was just a teenager. I don't know what age for sure, but quite young. Grandmother Bartlett told the story about how Mother was up there when the house was framed up and just the walls around on the second story. Mother was up there just walking around the top of that building on the plate, just walking around on top of that. She was about having a heart attack to get her down from there. Mother was, I guess, a teenager or young adult. She was so excited about getting her down.

But that was where Mother grew up and was living there when she got acquainted with Dad. But the parents would have nothing to do with him because he was a non-believer. So one day Grandmother Bartlett told Mother to go upstairs and clean her room, typical mother instructions. So she was up there cleaning and finally in the afternoon, Grandmother decided something was wrong because there as no noise coming down from her cleaning her room. So she went up and nope, she wasn't there.

Grandfather Bartlett came in from the fields and as soon as he came in, she says, "Go uptown and find May. She's supposed to be up there working and she's taken off, gone uptown. I think she's up there playing around. You go find her and bring her back." So Grandfather Bartlett went uptown and started talking to some people around, asking if they'd seen May. "Oh, yes, we saw her." Finally, one of them said, "Yeah, we saw her. She and Will Henderson just got married and got in the buggy and headed for Denver."

So Grandfather Bartlett come dashing back to the house and told Grandmother Bartlett what had happened and she says, "You get on your horse and you go down that road until you catch up with them and bring her back. You bring her back!" So away he went, down towards Jensen. At that time in life, why, the river crossing on the Green, at Jensen, was a ferry. When Grandfather Bartlett got to the river, the ferryman was on the far side of the river with his ferry boat tied up and he was working on it over there. So Grandfather Bartlett yelled and hollered and shouted and jumped up and down, did everything he could think of to attract his attention and get him to come back over and pick him up and take him across the river. But to no avail. Just as it was getting dusk, why, the ferryman kicked the boat into the water and brought the ferry back over to the Vernal side.

Grandfather Bartlett said, "You've got to take me back over. I've got to go down the road and catch up with those kids and bring her back!" And he said, "Oh, Brother Bartlett, it's dark now. The sun's down. I can't take my boat back across in the dark." So he had to come back home without her.

The kids had gone over and went clear to Bonanza. That's where the railroad came in to.



They got on the train in Bonan' there and went over to Grand Junction and back onto the one to Denver. So Dad finally got back to Denver and took a bride with him.

So it caused quite a stir. In fact, there was an article in the Quincy paper about the elopement. I'm sorry I can't find a copy of that. There's also a copy in the Vernal Express, a story about it. Anyway, that's the story.

KI: How long did it take them to get up the nerve to come home?

Royal: Not long, but I don't know the timing. Anyway, they came back. The parents wouldn't have anything to do with them to start with. They had the daughter, Mary, shortly, then finally Sidney came, a son, and they were still running the hotel at that time. Mother and Dad were having dinner at the hotel and Mary and Sidney, he was just toddler, and they were playing out in front on the sidewalk. They had a little wagon and Mary was supposed to be tending him.

All of a sudden she came back in and they said, "Where's Sidney?" She said, "Oh, he's in the ditch." They jumped up and ran out there and sure enough, he'd flipped the wagon and pulled himself into the ditch and he was gone. So they eventually found him in a culvert down Main Street a few blocks. Oh, he didn't last very long.

I think Mary was born in the house that's in the next street up and right on the corner. Mother and Dad lived in that little house for some time.

KI: They lived that close to her parents and her parents still wouldn't talk to her?

Royal: For a long time. I don't know the timing on it, but it ended up that Grandmother Bartlett lived in our house with us for the last twenty years of her life. Dad and Mother were the only ones of the Bartlett family that would or could take her in after Grandfather Bartlett was gone.

KI: Did your father ever join the LDS Church?

Royal: Yes, he eventually joined the church.

KI: I wondered if that made any difference.

Royal: But that was late. In fact, it was after Elaine and I were married. In fact, I baptized him.

Side two.

KI: Who was a Davis?

Royal: She was. She married a Bryson. So, it was the Brysons that eventually talked Dad into joining the Church.

KI: But it had nothing to do with your mother's parents?

Royal: No, no. They eventually were sealed, went through the temple and were sealed. We went to the temple with them.

KI: Did he stay with the Elk Hotel for a long time?

Royal: Well, they sold it shortly after Sidney was drowned, and his brother, Uncle Ernie, Ernest, his health broke down real quickly after that. He died here in Vernal. His wife took him, got him on a train and took him back East to have him buried, because she was from the East and she wanted out. She didn't want to stay in Vernal. That's when they sold that hotel, shortly after that. When he wasn't there to help run it. I can't quote you the times, but we can certainly get them out of the paper.

But Dad worked for a lot of people. When I was growing up he was working for L.H. Woodard Furniture Store. That was right on Vernal Avenue, right there where that building burned out [approximately 60 South Vernal Avenue]. That was L.H. Woodard's company and he worked for them for a number of years.

KI: What did he do for them?

Royal: He did everything for him, selling. He was a pretty good salesman. My dad was on the city council in the early days. He was county treasurer for a period of time. He was active in a lot of businesses. He was active in the Woodmen of the World. He was there representative here for a long time. Then he decided to build the motel; it was 1927. That's the year I was seven.

He built twelve little log cabins, camp cabins really, at the location where the Dinosaur Motel is now [251 East Main]. I've got pictures of those first cabins, if you'd like to see them.

KI: I would love to.

Royal: So he built those cabins, like I say, I was seven, so I was around, watched the construction come up. When they finished them, why, we started to rent them.

At this point I'd like to talk about Highway 40. When I was a kid, when I was seven, Highway 40 came through the pass, the divide up, we call it, where it does now, came down and where 1500 South [joins the highway], then it came east on 1500 South to 500 West, and came straight in to Main Street. It came east [from there] to Vernal Avenue, then went back south to 1500 South, then east down to the Naples road and on down that way. Actually, some of it had been paved with natural asphalt, but a lot of it was still gravel. I'm talking about the whole thing. But that's how traffic through Vernal started, or was running when Dad built the Uintah Camp Cabins, he called them.

They were really camp cabins. They were just one room with a bed and a table and a stove.

KI: Did they have outhouses?

Royal: We had a path. Beyond the office building, he built a ladies' shower and restroom and a men's shower and restroom. So they had to go from the cabin to the office building and in the back there he had hot water and hot showers.

But in those days, the first years of being in business there, people were still travelign with bedrolls. Nearly all the people carried a bedroll in their car if they were going any distance

at all because accommodations were so few and far between in those early days. So when people came in and wanted to rent a room, we rented them a room for a dollar. If we found out they didn't have a bedroll, we said, "Well, for a quarter we'll make the bed up for you." So we'd rent them the room for a dollar and charge them a quarter to make the bed up for them. So that's how I learned to make up beds.

KI: Isn't there an interesting little story about it being time to open the cabins and the bed frames hadn't come in or something?

Royal: That was a little later after we'd started the motel up at the upper place. Dad had just built that first row of cabins up there and I think there was a Lions Club convention coming in and we needed those rooms for them to be in. The shipment was supposed to come and, I'm a little hazy on that story, but know that the mattresses didn't arrive on time. I think the beds came, but no springs and mattresses for them. So we had to make beds on the floor for them, the people that were coming to the Lions Club convention. Chuck told that story a lot because he was a little more involved with the trauma of it. I remember it happening, but that's all.

KI: How much older is Chuck than you?

Royal: He's ten years older.

KI: Oh, yes. At seventeen years old he would remember a lot better. So, down here, did you live at these camp cabins or did you just spend a lot of time down here?

Royal: Well, for a year or two Barta and Helen and Ernie and I and Chuck and everybody worked down there, but nobody lived down there. But we did have one little room that was the office. It was built more like a service station. In fact, I think Dad had in mind that he'd put some gas pumps in there. But he never did.

But that first year, Highway 40 was paved down Main Street to First East and at First East the pavement ended because the highway went south at Vernal Avenue and there was just a dirt road down there a block and a half to the motel. So the first summer there, why, we would notice that there were a lot of cars that would come to the end of the pavement and they'd turn around and go back uptown and go out Vernal Avenue, because there was another set of camp cabins, Lewis Camp Cabins were over here on the corner of Second South and Vernal Avenue. So they were competition, and that's where they would go first. They didn't want to drive off the pavement.

So my brother Ernie and I would go up to the corner and stand up on the corner there are First East, by the old Coltharp house and on the banks of the city ditch, and we'd stand there until we'd see a car come and they'd invariably come to a stop when they came to the end of the pavement. So one of us would run out and jump on the running board of the car and tell them, "It's just a block down here and the roads are not that bad. They're dirt, but there's nothing wrong." We'd talk them into driving on down and renting a room down at the motel.

So whoever took that car would dash back up to the corner there and wait for the next one. Or I'd wait there for him and he took them. We did that all that summer in order to get the business down there because people just weren't going to drive off the pavement. Most of

Highway 40 was just gravel at that time, dirt road.

KI: How long did it take before they paved it?

Royal: About two or three years. And when that road was built, it was all built from First East down and then made the cutoff, the diagonal they've got down there. It was all down with teams of horses. They didn't have any power equipment at all to build that road. It was all done by hand with scrapers and teams.

But originally, [Highway] 40 came in to there and that half mile over there that they could have gone down **[staying on 1500 South??]** was, at that point, Lovers' Lane. There really wasn't a road down there; there was a trail, but there was not a road that a car could go on. In the moonlight, you could find your way down through there. That's why they called it Lovers' Lane.

KI: I've heard people talk about that, but I didn't know the road didn't go through.

Royal. Yeah, it came down, then out this way, then straight south, then it got to Naples and went straight south again, clear out through Davis, then it made another right angle turn, went down over the hill and across the river, there at Ashley Creek, then from there over to the hills and other angle back to the road that was Jensen Road. So all the corners in the valley here were ninety-degree turns until they built [the current] road and it was built on an angle. Later, the road was taken up to where it meets [Highway] 45 and goes out to the divide this way. [Highway 45 runs south towards Bonanza.] But that was a little later.

KI: What kind of responsibilities did you have at the camp cabins, besides bringing business in?

Royal: Well, I worked just doing chores around.

KI: Since the cabins had stoves, does that mean you stock wood?

Royal: Yes. We had to have wood for them, supply them with wood. It wasn't very long after that, and I can't tell you timing, but they hit natural gas out here in the Vernal oil field. So very shortly we had gas into town, they piped gas into town. So we converted the wood stoves to gas stoves. We put a little combination gas heater and cook stove in them. So that made an improvement there.

KI: Were people allowed to cook in there?

Royal: Oh, yeah. Chuck took over about that time, to run the motel down there. Dad and Mother and the rest of us were running the motel on 400 West.

KI: What was the place down here on Main Street called?

Royal: That was originally the Uintah Camp Cabins. Then after Chuck took over, he changed it to a motel, then he changed it to Dinosaur Motel.

KI: That's still the name today, isn't it?

Royal: It's now the Best Western Dinosaur Inn. I changed it from Camp Cabins after I took it over in 1954. I came back to Vernal in '54 and bought it from Chuck because Chuck wanted to get into the oil field business. He was buying and selling oil lease ground. He and Spot Johnson were making a living of that and he wanted to get into that. He thought he could make a lot more money than he was making in the motel. In the meantime, I'd been in the service, gone to the war.

KI: You said you also went to Utah State.

Royal: Yes, I went to Utah State here from high school. I graduated in '38 and I graduated from Utah State in '42.

KI: Then just enlisted in the service?

Royal: Well, the reason I didn't enlist, taken out in the draft, earlier than I did was because I was taking ROTC at Utah State. See, I graduated in '42 and the war came along in December of '41, so I was able to stay in school and graduate because I was in ROTC. I got my 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant's commission and knew I was going to have a job.

At Christmas time I talked Elaine into coming up to Utah State. She was going to BYU.

KI: Where was Elaine from?

Royal: She was born in Ogden. Her family basically lived in Provo. Her dad was a building contractor. He built a number of schools and buildings and lots of houses. He came out here to build the Indian Hospital at Fort Duchesne. That was the year I was a junior in high school. It happened to be that year that I was the Prom committee to decorate Imperial Hall for the Junior Prom. I don't know if they still do it or not, but anyway, in those days you would ask a girl to go to the prom with you, as a date, and then they'd have the Post Prom a week later on a Saturday, and the girl that you took to the prom normally would ask you to go to the Post Prom.

KI: The Post Prom was a dance too?

Royal: This was the year I was a junior and that was one of the years Barney White was here in the high school. He designed all of the decorations for our Junior Prom. Of course, being a junior I worked night and day on that thing until it was all put together. Anyway, my date, after the prom, got sick and didn't ask me to go the Post Prom. I wasn't about to stay home, so I went to the Post Prom stag. There were a number of other fellows there that were stag.

KI: Were there any girls that went stag?

Royal: No, there were not supposed to be. Anyway, Elaine was living in Provo, this was when her Dad was building the hospital over there, and she was very good friends with Naoma

Dillman and Mr. Dillman was a representative to the State Legislature. So he had been asked to be a patron at our Junior Prom. He couldn't make it to the prom, but he came to the Post Prom and brought his daughter Naoma and Elaine with him to the Post Prom.

When they arrived, things were underway, they were dancing. So they came in and Elaine says that they came in and sat down on the seats around the dance floor and Naoma, of course, being from here, knew a lot of the boys and she was up and dancing right away. So Mr. Dillman sat there with Elaine and she wasn't getting up and dancing. So he said, "This won't do. Come on and I'll introduce you to these fellows." So there was a stag line there and he came up to the stag line, just a bunch of stags that were there, and introduced Elaine to these fellows.

I didn't happen to be in the line at the time. I was off doing something else. But right at the appropriate time, I came back and stood at the head of the line. This was after Elaine had been introduced to half a dozen or more people. Then he said, "All right. Now you ask one of them to dance." So she came back to the head of the line where she thought the first one was that she had been introduced to and asked him to dance and that was me. So I had never seen her before. But here was this beautiful blond, popped up in front of me, and asked me to dance. So I accepted. So we danced and we danced and we've been dancing ever since. She was a sophomore and I was a junior.

After that, why, I kept tabs on her, where she was. She came out to UIC and I got together with her there. After they got the hospital built, why, they went back to Salt Lake, and her father and his sister had bought the Wilson Hotel. So they were actually living at the Wilson Hotel. When I found out that's where she was, every time I could get an excuse to go to Salt Lake, I'd drop in to the Wilson Hotel to see if she was around. So I kept kind of close tabs on her for that next summer. Then the year that I was a sophomore at Utah State, she started at the BYU. So every time there was a weekend that I didn't have anything to do, I'd hitchhike to Provo. I'd usually get there just about the time to butt in on her dancing at the party, wherever she was. I made quite a nuisance of myself for a couple of years there just keeping tabs on her to see her every time I could.

So when the war came along and I finally talked her into coming and going to Utah State for the winter and spring quarters that year, I got her up there and come March, we decided we'd get married. So we got married between winter and spring quarters.

KI: This was before you finished school?

Royal. Yes. I was a senior; she was a junior. But I knew I was going to go right into the service as soon as graduation was over. I'd go in as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. I figured going in as a Lieutenant, I could support a wife, whatever happened. So we got married and had a honeymoon between quarters, then back to school. At the time I was doing some instructing in the radio lab. My major at Utah State was in radio engineering. My activities on the stage, and that type, were just incidental activities. But I was learning about engineering of radios. Radios were still in a pretty primitive state. We didn't have any audio to speak of. Most communication was done with Morse Code. So I had pretty good bringing up in that. Radios were starting to develop, but I thinking more in terms of commercial radio than anything else. That's what I was doing. I did teach some classes as a student instructor, but I got my degree.

When I got my orders to report, why, I was then in the Coast Artillery. That's the branch that the school had up there was Coast Artillery. I knew where I was going to be as far as there, I

thought. But anyway, after graduation, after we'd been married, I went down to Fort Douglas to report for active duty.

There's a little interlude there that I'd like to insert because the year I was at ROTC camp, that's between the sophomore and junior/senior year I went to... Well, the year before that I went they had civilian pilot training at Utah State, and I got involved with that. I took the primary training, learning how to fly a Piper Cub.

KI: Was that just a class at Utah State or was it through the ROTC?

Royal: No, that wasn't through ROTC. It was civilian pilot training. I had to pay some to get into it, but the primary course gave me enough hours to get a private pilot's license. Then the summer following that, they had a secondary course down at the University of Utah and I got selected to take that training. So that summer I went down to the University of Utah for ground training and then took our flight training out at the Salt Lake airport. Out there we were flying Waco bi-planes. We were flying Piper Cubs at Utah State, that was a very light plane. The Waco was a bi-plane, open cockpit. So that's what you got your training in there.

The next year was the year I had to go to ROTC camp after I'd taken the secondary. I was sent to Fort Orden on the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge, that was for my six weeks summer camp training. While I was at camp, my brother Chuck called me down there and said that fellows here in Vernal had got together and decided they were going to start a flying club and they'd bought a Piper Cub, but they had to take delivery at the factory. The factory was in the middle of Pennsylvania, Lockhaven, Pennsylvania. They wondered if since I'd had my flight training, if I'd be interested in going back to the factory and picking up the plane and flying it back to Utah. I said, "Sure would!" I said, "I have about another two weeks of training, and then I'll be free. I'd be glad to go." He said, "Well, Dad and Mother have said they will try to drive you back to Lockhaven to pick up the plane." So if I'd come and soon as I could, why, we could go. So I said yes.

As soon as camp was over, I got in my little Model A Ford that I had picked up to be able to get to the airport and back to school, for the training sessions. So I had that and we'd taken that for the fellows to drive down to the ROTC camp and back. So as soon as it was over, we jumped in that thing and drove twenty-four hours straight, taking turns driving, to get back to Vernal so I could take off to go to pick up the airplane.

That was how I really got started flying. I got quite an experience flying that plane across the United States. All it had was a compass and an altimeter. The gas gauge was a wire that stuck up through the gas cap in the front. When it got down to the kink on the top of it and it was hitting the gas cap, you were going to be out of gas. But that was how we picked up that Piper Cub.

My cousin, Charlie Bingham, he just lived down the street from us, he had take the primary course in the session following when I had taken it. So he had his private license. So I talked him into going with me so there would be two of us flying and I wouldn't be flying solo.

KI: Where the seats behind one another? They weren't to the side of each other, were they?

Royal: No, front to back. So he got in the car with Mother and Dad and away we took off, east. We drove about as hard as we could and got back there and the plane was ready to go when we

got there.

We took off from Lockhaven and just before we took off, I said, "We're going to fly into Newark." I had an uncle in Newark, New Jersey, and a cousin. I wanted to drop in and see them before we headed west. They said, "Well, you can't fly into Newark without a radio, and this plane doesn't have a radio." It put me in a quandary. I said, "Well, what am I going to do?" He said, "Well, we've got a portable radio that you can follow the airways with and listen to the control tower." He said all we needed was a receiver, to be able to contact them there. So I said, "Well, that sounds pretty good to me." So I bought it for thirty-five dollars; one of these carry around radios that had the airway frequencies available on it.

So we took off and as soon as we got in the air, I started trying to tune in the dots and the dahs [Morse Code] so that you could follow the airway. The airway ? was made so that on one half of the airway you'd hear an "a" and the other side of the airway you'd hear an "n". Now when the two, "a" and "n," mesh, on the "dah-dah" and the "dah-da-dah", when they'd mesh they'd make one solid tone, so you had to follow that tone. If you moved over and started hearing the "a," you'd know you were too far over here; if you heard the "n," you'd know you're too far over here. That's the way you followed the airway.

When I got up there and tuned it in, I could hardly hear the tone because the airplane had not been grounded, so the ignition noise from the engine was overriding anything that the radio could pick up. But we were on our way and we had no alternative, we didn't think, but to proceed with our plan. So we got into Newark and I had to tune into the control tower and I could hear him talking, but I couldn't understand anything through the static. But we had no alternative but to land. We'd used up what gas we had. We couldn't have time to find another airport to go land on it, so we had to land. So I went around a couple of times and walked up the airways watching for other traffic and finally made a decision that I had enough room to get in and I made a turn onto the runway and landed. Just as I hit the ground, why, the control tower started flashing a red light at me, so I knew I was in trouble.

I made the first turn off the runway that I came to and just as I did, a DC3 came in and landed right behind me. If I'd have been a little slower, he'd have had to go around and then I'd had more people mad at me.

KI: Either that or you'd have been dead, he have taken you out or something.

Royal: As soon as I got up to the ramp and parked, the guy came out from the office and said, "The control tower wants to talk to you right now." So I got my lecture and I told him what the situation was, but I had the radio so I was legal, but I couldn't get it tuned in close enough that I could understand him. So he said, "Before you leave in the morning, you call up to the tower and let's get you tuned up right so you can hear." I said okay.

So we stayed overnight that night and visited with Uncle Charlie and Aunt Louise and a cousin. The next morning we got to the airport, checked in and called the control tower and got permission to go. I got down to the runway and they gave me the green light and I took off and away we went. We made a trip over New York City and flew around the skyscrapers once and headed straight south. Our route was to go down past Washington, D.C., to Virginia and then go straight west through Virginia and Tennessee and out to Arkansas. My sister Barta and her husband Don, he was a forestry teacher and professor and he was teaching down at the University of Arkansas. So we were going by there on the way and say hi on our way back to



Utah.

Well, that took us down through Virginia, all of Tennessee and across the river at Memphis and on out into Arkansas.

KI: Could you do that in one day?

Royal: No, we stopped in Roanoke, Virginia, our first night out. The second night we were at Little Rock [Arkansas]. We stayed over one night there, a night and a day, I think, to visit with them and get to see a little of Arkansas. Then we took off and headed west again from there into the lower part of Missouri, and back across the southern part of Missouri into Colorado Springs. When we were headed for Colorado, why, we started getting low on gas.

We were watching the map and there were a couple of towns up ahead of us and they both showed they had airports there, so we decided we were in good shape. We got to the first one and landed and pulled up in front of the hangar and it was full of tumbleweeds, nobody around. The next town was about thirty miles up and we knew we could make that thirty miles more with the gas we had, so we took off again and headed west. When we got to that little town, we looked around and it didn't look any better. But we didn't have any choice but to land that time. So one of us went out to the road, it was close to the runway, and hitchhiked a ride into town, which was about five miles, bought ten gallons of car gas, brought it back and put it in. We took off fine. We flew up into Colorado, in Denver. Just as we were passing Colorado Springs, headed north to Denver, we hit a head wind that was really pretty severe. We didn't realize how severe it was until we were going up towards the pass there, flying right along the highway. We looked down and all of a sudden, the trucks were passing us. We were up there flying and not making much headway. We were flying into a headwind that was just keeping us almost still.

We finally made it over the pass and the next thing we could see was a thunderstorm moving into the airport in Denver. So we had a race with a thunderstorm to get on the ground before it hit. We just made it. We stayed the night there in Denver, took off the next day and got all gassed up and headed north and went up to Laramie. We didn't dare try to cross the Rockies; we didn't know what the altitude capability of the Piper Cub was. Those were pretty high mountains. Looking at the back, we knew if we went up into Wyoming and back across that way, we didn't have to get over as high mountains. So we flew up there and stopped at Laramie and gassed up again so we'd have plenty of gas, then took off and flew across Bear Lake and into Logan. That's where we both had our training, so we wanted to show off our new airplane. Floyd Hansen, that was our instructor up there, we wanted to show him what we had. We flew up there and landed at Logan, then back down to Provo. I had to stop at Provo to show off the new airplane to Elaine, she was my best friend. Then we finally made it back to Vernal, Utah.

KI: What kind of landing strip was here?

Royal: Well, the boys had taken a grader and went out east on a hill east of the city/county dump and there's a little ridge out there that's pretty flat on top. They bladed off a runway on top of that hill and that's where we landed. I flew off of that all the rest of the summer, taking all of the people that had an interest in that airplane for their rides. I kind of introduced them to the airplane and even let them handle the controls a little bit when we were up on the smooth flying.